

Such is the history of the Bourbon monarchs of Spain. When we bear in mind that, with the exception of the last, all have wielded absolute authority—disposing of the life, property, and liberties of their subjects as their caprice prompted—and weigh in the balance the capacity for such a task and the fitness for such a responsibility possessed by favorite-ridden imbeciles like Philip V. and Ferdinand VI., a bigot like Carlos III., a worthless profligate like Carlos IV., a monster of perfidy and cruelty like Ferdinand VII., or a wretched girl like Isabella—we may well shed a tear over unhappy Spain, and thank Heaven that we were not born subjects of a hereditary despotism.

## BABY BLOOM.

## I.

THERE was not a prettier little maiden in all Harlem than Baby Bloom. Cherry-cheeked, bright-eyed, and rosy-lipped, she was the incarnation of rural health and beauty. As she ran, early in the morning, down the meadows that bordered on the river, laughing gleefully to herself, and talking to the birds as if they were old and intimate friends of hers, and had known her for years, many a youth turned his head to look at her, and had visions of her light figure and roguish eyes flitting all day afterward between him and his work.

One young fellow, in particular, was seriously troubled about Baby Bloom. Nearly every morning, as he was walking steadily to his work—he being apprenticed to a carpenter in the village—he would almost certainly encounter Baby Bloom tripping along the road, or gathering the wild plants that crept and twined through the locust fences. When the little maiden saw Reuben Lowe approaching—and I verily believe that the wicked little thing saw him long before she pretended to see him—she would turn, with a merry toss of her head, and chirp out a “Good-morrow, Master Reuben.” Then she would bend her head down, and affect to be very busy with her plants indeed. Reuben, with a hearty greeting, and somewhat rustic bow, would then stop in the centre of the road, looking very much as if he would have given one of his ears to have some pretty speech to make; Baby all the while botanizing with absorbing anxiety. “Won’t you walk a bit of the way with me, Baby?” Reuben would at last blurt out. “I walk with you, Master Reuben!” she would cry, in utter amazement; “what an idea! Go on; you will be late for your work.”

“I’ll work all the better, Baby, if you will walk a part of the way with me. Just as far as the three pollards. Do, now!”

“You are very impudent, Master Reuben, not to take an answer when you get one. I won’t walk with you.”

“Ah! but you will, though,” Reuben would cry, springing desperately over the fence, and seizing Baby’s nosegay of flowers, with which he would retreat in triumph. “Now, Baby, if you want your flowers you must come and take them.”

Baby would pretend to weep, and call Reuben a brute, and a cruel wretch. But she nevertheless would follow the flowers. Then Reuben would march backward along the road, holding the nosegay high out of Baby’s reach, and mocking all her efforts to obtain it, until they reached the three pollards, and often journeyed far beyond them, when he would relinquish his prize reluctantly, and go off to his work, thinking of nothing in the world but Baby Bloom; who, on her side, as she tripped home again, thought of nobody but Reuben Lowe.

How this little maiden came to be called Baby Bloom, I can not tell positively. I know, however, that she came of German parents, whose name, when they first settled in the village, was Blum, which in time came to be written Bloom. Why she was called Baby, is a mystery to me. She certainly was very childish-looking, and was full of juvenile tricks and innocent caprices; so that, probably, she was called so originally in sport, and the name clung to her eventually in earnest. Baby’s father was an old German emigrant, whose trade was harness-making. He had a little store in the village, filled with saddles and bridles, spurs and whips, traces and girths, and all the paraphernalia with which we moderns think it necessary to decorate our horses. He drove a thriving business; and as Baby was his only child, the people of the village settled among themselves that the twenty thousand dollars which the old man kept in the Bruderschaft Bank would become Baby’s property at his death. Baby had a mother also, an excellent old lady, with coarse skin and a thick waist, who wore seven or eight blue blankets by way of petticoats, and devoted all her spare moments to attending to her large stock of poultry. Owing to this partiality of the good lady for such species of stock, the interior of Mr. Bloom’s house somewhat resembled an aviary. But more frequently it might have been characterized as a gallinaceous hospital. Fowls in every stage of infirmity and convalescence were distributed through the establishment. There was generally a white bantam, with his leg in splints, in the parlor. Numerous maimed turkeys hobbled and gobbled about the kitchen; but it was upon a gigantic Shanghai cock, of attenuated form and feeble gait, that Mrs. Bloom’s tenderest care was lavished. This unhappy fowl had been locked out one night in the depth of winter. The next morning he was found frozen into a solid lump, and apparently dead. After incredible exertions, and a course of warm baths, brandy, and flannel wrappings, the Shanghai showed symptoms of returning animation. He presently uttered a feeble crow, and in the course of another hour staggered upon his legs. But his constitution was forever ruined. From being a cock of brave and warlike aspect, he degenerated into a bird of consumptive and rueful appearance. Nothing would fatten him. He tottered along the floor with the gait of premature old age, and his crow was weak and wheezing. Mrs. Bloom believed that something was

the matter with his lungs, and he was accordingly kept on a strictly consumptive diet. He slept in a box lined with flannel, and was the only fowl of the establishment who enjoyed the privilege of entering the shop. There he would stand on the doorstep, in the sunshine, all day long, with his head sunk between his shoulders, and the tokens of a confirmed valetudinarian written in his lack-lustre eyes.

Thus Mr. and Mrs. Bloom and Baby and the fowls all lived happily enough, in their old-fashioned house, with its peaked roof and queer dingy staircases. Mr. Bloom himself was a saddler of a meditative habit. He liked his pipe and his glass of *Lager Beer*, and was never known to have been excited save once, and that was when the news reached him that a schooner from Bremen, laden with a large cargo of sauerkraut, had gone to the bottom in a storm. Sometimes Reuben Lowe would drop in of an evening, on pretense of smoking a pipe and having a friendly glass of beer with the old man; but I strongly suspect that the long, silent sittings were endured by Reuben more on account of the snatches of chat he occasionally had with Baby, than for any pleasure he had in the old saddler's company. Things went on this way for some time, until one evening Reuben marched into the parlor, where old Bloom was sitting alone with his pipe, and boldly asked for Baby in marriage. What internal effect this proposition had on the old gentleman no one could tell, for without even removing his pipe from between his lips, he told Reuben, in the calmest and briefest manner, to call next evening for his answer. Next evening Reuben called. He was received by Mr. and Mrs. Bloom, who, I think, put on an extra petticoat in honor of the occasion. After a short silence, Reuben was informed that his proposition could not be entertained—that he was a very excellent young man, but poor; while Baby Bloom would be possessed of such a fortune at her father's death as would entitle her to look higher than a carpenter's apprentice. I am quite sure that neither the old saddler or his wife thought there was any thing cruel or contemptible in such a course. They never thought for a moment of consulting Baby herself. They looked on the whole affair as a sort of business matter, which was to be considered in a purely pecuniary light.

It was in vain that Reuben entreated and vowed. It was in vain that he asked for a conditional engagement, until he became rich, which he promised most faithfully to do, in any period of time that the old people chose to name. Mr. Bloom calmly smoked his pipe, and occasionally shook his head; and Mrs. Bloom bruised a plateful of millet-seed for a poultice that was about to be applied to the white bantam's leg. So Reuben had to depart with his rejected proposal; and as after this he came no more to smoke a pipe with the old saddler, his only opportunity of seeing Baby was in the mornings when he went to work, and then, somehow, by

a singular chance, that innocent little maiden was always out gathering flowers.

## II.

"When will you be back, Baby?"

"I shan't be long, mother. I will only just run down to Mrs. Foster's, to get the eggs, and shall be back in an hour at farthest."

"There's a good child. And, Baby, take particular care not to break any of the eggs. It's the only chance I have of getting any of that breed, and it won't do to lose it."

So Baby put on her wide-leafed hat, for it was summer, and giving her mother a peck on the cheek, which was meant to pass for a kiss, tripped down the road, chirping out little fragments of songs, as usual.

At the period about which I write, Harlem was not what it is now. The village consisted of a very few houses, scattered along the roadside at considerable intervals. There was no screaming locomotive flying along, in mid-air, within sight of the village. No overloaded stages lumbered along the road that lay between it and New York; and great tracks of swampy land, as yet undrained, stretched between it and the river. At the time I speak of there was much forest yet standing about Harlem. Huge masses of forest, so choked and filled with matted underwood that the daylight rarely shone upon the brown soil beneath. There were talks of bears then among the honest villagers; and black unwieldy shapes were sometimes seen stealing, of moonlight nights, through the orchards, to the great dismay of some belated youth, who made the family circle tremble that night with his account of his interview with the bear. The fierce catamount, too, lurked among the woods, and poultry-yards suffered fearfully from nocturnal depredations. Indeed, not long before, a fine boy, of some eight years old, who had wandered off into the woods to gather huckleberries, was found two days afterward with his young throat torn open, and a tuft of catamount's hair clutched desperately in his little hand.

Mrs. Foster's house lay on the road that stretches between Harlem and New Rochelle, so that Baby Bloom had, at least, a walk of a mile and a half before she could obtain the priceless eggs for which her mother sighed. But she did not mind that, for it was very early in the morning, and it was more than probable that somebody would be passing along on his way to work. So Baby Bloom tripped merrily on, and sang, as she went, a pretty little love ditty about a maiden who followed her lover to sea, and was discovered by him just as the ship was going down. She reached the old locust fence, and, of course, could not miss the opportunity of gathering a nosegay, so she crept through, and was soon plucking, with dainty care, sprigs of lobelia and golden-rod. But now and again she would stop and listen, as if watching for some familiar step, and hearing it not, would resume her task with a mournful expression, and her song would have a sadder cadence.

Presently one that was overlooking her would have seen a sudden change come over Baby Bloom. He would have seen her eyes suddenly brighten, and her cheeks flush. He would also have seen her turn her back resolutely to a certain point of the road, and bend over a piece of convolvulus, as if nothing on earth would ever induce her to look up again. The cause of all this strategy seemed to be nothing more or less than the echoes of a sturdy step upon the road. Tramp, tramp, it came along, and the nearer it came the more steadfastly did Baby Bloom consider the physical economy of the convolvulus. Presently the footsteps came to a halt, and were followed by a creaking of the locust fence, and a heavy thud upon the turf.

"Oh, ho!" thought Baby Bloom, "so you come over the fence to-day without saying, 'By your leave,' Master Reuben. It will go hard with me if I don't punish your impertinence." So she continued to remain quite oblivious of the footsteps, until at last a heavy hand was laid upon her shoulder.

"Oh! is that you?" said Baby, carelessly, without even lifting her head, "there—I can't attend to you now. I am busy."

"It is me, my pretty lass," replied a harsh, powerful voice, "and I am glad to see such a pretty maiden gathering such pretty flowers."

Baby started as if a dagger had been thrust suddenly through her heart. It was not Reuben's voice! She lifted her eyes hurriedly, and, although she did not scream, her lips and cheeks became deadly pale. A tall and singular-looking man was standing over her. His hair, which was bright auburn, hung down over his shoulders in huge tangled masses, and mingled with his matted yellow beard. His face was thin and pale, and his eyes seemed what might be called a fiery blue. His entire appearance was wild and strange. His clothes were torn and dusty, and a curious chain, formed of pine cones strung together, hung around his neck. His glance was wonderfully restless, and a convulsive nervous twitching seemed to play continually around the corners of his mouth. He certainly was far from being the kind of person that a timid little maiden of sixteen would choose for the companion in a *tête-à-tête*.

Baby Bloom was still with terror as this wild being disclosed himself to her. She still knelt, with the flowers grasped tightly in her hand, gazing fixedly up at him with her large, round blue eyes. A terror that she could not analyze or account for, seemed to have taken possession of her. This man, as yet, had committed no act of violence, nor did he seem intent on such, yet she felt as if she was about to be overwhelmed with some terrible misfortune.

"Well, sweet lass, this is a merry morning," he continued, in a deep, lugubrious tone that contrasted strangely with his avowed appreciation of the bright sunshine and fragrant fields.

"Yes, Sir!" answered Baby Bloom, almost mechanically, never for a moment taking her eyes from his face.

"A merry morning, a merry morning!" he rapidly went on. "The birds are well to-day, lass. My son, the Oriole, came to see me this morning in the gray of the dawn, and told me he was going to give a banquet in the woods to-day, so I came for you."

"For me, Sir!" gasped poor Baby Bloom, still deeper stricken with increasing terror. "Oh! I can not go—I must go to Mrs. Foster's," and she made an effort to rise, but she had scarcely got to her feet when the man caught her hand and held it tightly. Poor Baby felt as if her last hour was come. "Oh, let me go, Sir!—do let me go!" she pleaded, in almost a whisper, for terror had nearly taken away her voice. "My mother is waiting for me, and I am in haste."

"We will have a glorious time of it," pursued the maniac, heedless of her entreaties. Cat-bird and his wife are coming, and all the squirrels are out gathering nuts for the dessert. Besides," he continued, lowering his tone to a whisper, "the Regulus Cristata has promised to come, and bring his top-knot with him!" And he looked at Baby Bloom as if he expected her to be completely overwhelmed by this astounding information.

"Oh!" cried Baby, her eyes filling with tears, and her little heart lying as still in her bosom as a frightened bird in its nest—"oh! if Reuben were only here;" and for a moment she listened intently, thinking she might hear his footstep on the road. But there came no sound. Seeing her so still, the man let drop her hand, and moved away a pace or two, still watching her intently.

"I am the Cock of the Rock, my dear," said he, bowing with much solemnity as he thus introduced himself. "We will make a nest together."

Baby shrank so far into a bunch of sumach, that it seemed as if she really was about to take the hint, and commence the process of nidification immediately.

"I never felt in better plumage," went on her strange companion, rustling his arms as if they were a gorgeous pair of wings; "I am quite over my moulting."

If Baby could have laughed, or if she had a laugh in her, it would certainly have come out at that moment. But the terror that so filled her little heart left no space for any mirthful feeling, and this mad talk seemed to her so awful, that, by a sudden and almost superhuman effort, she sprang to her feet and strove to fly. In an instant, with a weird, unearthly cry, the madman had pounced upon her, lifted her delicate form in his sinewy arms as if she had been a bunch of ostrich plumes, and before she could draw breath twice was scudding with her on his shoulder across the lonely fields.

She did not scream. She could not scream. She lay quite still in a trance of terror. The fields across which they sped were blooming with the crimson tufts of the sumach. The golden-rod lifted up its tall spires from out the parched grass, and the blackbird sat upon the

maple bough and sang short love-songs to his dusky mate. She noted all these things idly as her captor bounded along with the sinewy speed of a deer. Then she began to think of Reuben. How he would come along the road, watching for her; and how sadly he would go to his work when he found she was not at the old place. She tried to think what her mother and father would do, when it was discovered that she was gone—for she did not even feed herself with the hope of ever seeing them again—and wondered if the white bantam would miss her. She thought, of course, that this wild man would kill her when he got her into the woods, and racked her brain in trying to imagine the way in which her murder would be accomplished. Whether it would be a stick or a stone; or whether he would light a fire, and dance round her while she was burning, as she had heard the Indians did of old. Now and then she would wearily strain her eyes across the green fields in search of some familiar face—there lurked a faint hope of Reuben's help in her heart yet—but she saw nothing but yellow fields dotted with patches of fiery sumach, with here and there a lonely pond, fringed with hazel copses, into which she sometimes thought the maniac was about to plunge her.

Thus they drew nearer and nearer to the huge lonely woods that stretched away far into the interior of the island; and as Baby Bloom approached their sombre edges, they seemed to her like some black ocean in which she was about to be engulfed.

They were soon immersed in the forest. A deep twilight, that only half revealed the path, made it all the more frightful. Here and there the sunlight struggled into an open patch, and taking the hues of the autumn leaves through which it passed, painted the ground like the floor of a cathedral when the day illuminates its stained windows. Baby Bloom was now getting very weak and exhausted. The attitude in which she was held by the wild man was distressing in the extreme, and her slight frame was almost breaking as he folded her in his arms. Once or twice she essayed a sort of plaintive remonstrance with him, and tried to bribe or cajole him into setting her free; but as the only reply she got was an unearthly hallo, and an increased rate of speed, she gave up all hope of escape by fair means, and had little prospect of getting her liberty by foul ones.

At last they reached a species of open glade far away in the interior of the forest. A huge evergreen oak lifted its sturdy limbs in the centre of the open patch, and spread them abroad until they touched the trees that encircled it. Here the maniac stopped, and placed Baby Bloom on the ground. Poor thing! between fright and exhaustion, her limbs were so weak that she could not stand; so that the moment her feet touched the sward she sank at full length.

"Now, my lass," said the maniac, gazing at her with an approving smirk, "we'll build our

nest here, up in that tree"—pointing to the oak—"and it shall be so handsome that the Regulus Cristata will die of envy. But we must hasten," he continued rapidly; "the sun is nearly at noon, and the birds will be here before long. Besides, if we haven't it finished to-night, the moon will scold us. And oh! how bitter she is when she is angry. Her words are like ice—so cold, so cold! and she pours them down straight on your head until they cut in—in to the brain, and freeze it up forever. We must not anger the moon, my lass. Come, let us gather moss."

So saying, and heedless whether Baby obeyed him or not, he stooped down and commenced gathering the thick moss that grew all round the place. Several times Baby Bloom thought that his attention would be so occupied with his task that she might manage to steal away unseen. But no! his glance was ever restless and wary, and she had nothing left but to sit still, and watching, praying to Heaven, with all the strength of her young soul, that help might come. She did not long remain so, however. The maniac had soon collected a huge pile of moss, and when he had disposed of it in a heap in the centre of the open space, he beckoned to her imperiously. She did not stir.

"Come!" he cried impatiently, stamping his foot.

"Please—please let me go home, Sir—to my mother—to Reuben. Oh! do let me go!" and Baby wept, and wrung her hands, but did not rise.

"We are wanted up there!" he whispered, pointing mysteriously to a high cleft in the great oak. "We must go."

Baby Bloom clasped her hands in despair, and rocked to and fro on the earth; but the maniac did not give her much time for inactive sorrow, for he seized her once more, and hoisting her on his shoulder, commenced crawling up the rugged trunk of the tree with almost supernatural agility and strength. Higher and higher he climbed until he reached a portion where disease had eaten a large cavity into one of the huge main branches; and this hole, surrounded as it was with twisted limbs, formed a sort of niche in which a couple of persons might easily sit.

"This is to be our nest," he cried triumphantly, as he swung Baby Bloom inside. "Here we'll sit and sing all day long. You sing, don't you? Sing me a song, my Bee-bird."

He looked so imperious and kingly as he said this, sitting at the threshold of the little niche, and had such a dangerous intermittent fire in his blue eye that Baby dared not refuse. So, in hopes that by falling in with his humor she might succeed in softening his heart a little, she began a tremulous ditty that gradually quavered off into a burst of tears. He scarce appeared to listen, and before she ended burst into another fit of talking.

"I am the *Chlamydera Maculata*, a spotted bower-bird," he went on. "I am principally to be found in New South Wales, and am very



abundant at Bezi, on the river Mokai. I am very shy, and my habits are with difficulty observed by naturalists. Mr. Gould gives an excellent description of the manner in which I build my nest. I live in the Australian plains, which are studded with the acacia pendulata; and the bower which I construct, and from which I take my name, is very curious, exhibiting traces of a remarkable architectural faculty."

Baby, to whom this scientific rigmarole was utterly unintelligible, gazed at him with mingled terror and wonder. Suddenly the quick ear of her companion caught some sound in the forest, for he arrested his disquisition, and bent forward anxiously, and listened in perfect silence. Then the sound struck on Baby's ear—a faint hallo, far, far away. Oh! how her heart beat, and how she prayed to God that it might be faithful Reuben seeking for her! Then came the yelp of a dog, growing louder and more furious each moment. It was certainly some one on her track. The maniac grew restless. He flitted like a monkey from bough to bough, casting fiery glances of suspicion at Baby, who sat in her cell with blanched cheeks and clasped hands, listening with all her might. Now the sounds came very near, and Baby, feeling that the time was come, poured forth all her long pent-up terror in one shrill and echoing shriek. It was answered instantly by a shout. The maniac sprang with a howl toward her, when the copse crashed, a small dog leaped panting into the open space. Baby Bloom uttered a cry of joy, and the next moment she saw Reuben Lowe at the foot of the tree gazing up at her.

### III.

"Baby, dear Baby! are you safe?" cried Reuben, striving with glances of intensest anxiety to penetrate the thick foliage by which she was screened.

"Quite safe, dear Reuben. But for God's sake take me down out of this."

"In a moment, Baby;" and the next instant Reuben was swiftly creeping up the trunk. But he reckoned without his host. The instant the maniac saw his design, he swung himself with lightning-like rapidity from branch to branch, until he reached the first fork of the tree, and there he waited, peering down into Reuben's ascending face with his fiery blue eyes.

"Let me up, scoundrel," said Reuben, as he neared the fork. "Let me up, or I will kill you."

"Whoo! I am the Cock of the Rock! You shall not rob my nest, or catch my little singing Bee-bird. Whoo!" and the maniac grinned and shouted and flung his arms fiercely about.

Reuben, with a powerful effort, strove to swing himself into the fork, but his opponent was too quick for him, and striking Reuben a fearful blow in the chest with his foot, he flung him, stunned and bruised, to the ground. Baby Bloom from her nest above uttered a faint shriek, and the maniac laughed and shouted,

and joyously proclaimed himself to be a number of strange birds one after the other.

Reuben though bruised, was not, however, disabled. He was on his legs in an instant, and after a moment's reflection ran to the foot of a large locust-tree whose branches intermingled with those of the oak. With an agility that could scarcely be expected after his late tremendous fall, he swarmed up the trunk like a wild cat, and the next instant was speeding up through the limbs until he reached one that projected into the leafy heart of the oak-tree. His face was very pale, but his brows were knit darkly, and Baby Bloom could see that he was determined to rescue her at the cost of his life. When he reached the bough, he ran out lightly along the swaying pathway it formed, and the maniac, divining his intention, sprang up the oak boughs to meet him.

"Have no fear, Baby," he cried, as he reached the very end, which swung beneath his weight as if it would break each moment. "I will be with you in a moment. Have courage, lass!" So saying, he leaped boldly into the oak branches, clutching desperately at the nearest ones. Fortunately he succeeded in grasping one strong enough to bear him, just as the maniac reached him. Reuben, now certain of his footing, turned furiously on his opponent, and caught him by the throat with the only hand which he had at liberty. The boughs of the sturdy old tree shook and heaved with the struggle, and the birds flew screaming around the glade. The contest, however, was but brief, for the madman, finding himself overpowered, let go his hold, and dropped with the lightness of a cat upon the sward beneath. The next instant Reuben had Baby in his arms.

There was no time, however, to be lost in caresses. Reuben explained in a few words that Baby had been missed—that the whole village was out in search of her, and that her father and mother were traversing the fields like wild people, looking for their child. He further added, what perhaps Baby was not sorry to hear, that old Bloom had told Reuben that if he brought back his daughter in safety his suit, once rejected, would be so no longer.

This safety was not yet assured. The mad creature beneath seemed possessed with a demon. He foamed, and shrieked, and flung up stones and fragments of turf into the tree, and Reuben felt sorely puzzled how to get Baby down in the face of so infuriated a maniac. He first thought of descending himself, and endeavoring to secure him, and bind him hand and foot. But there was the chance of his failing in the attempt, and if the madman conquered him, Baby was again at his mercy. Neither did he like to wait for the chance of assistance arriving, for night was falling rapidly, and it was more than probable that those who were on the same errand as himself would not pass that way. He was completely at bay, and racked his brain to no purpose for some means of escape.

He was soon roused into activity. The madman, with the devilish cunning so characteristic of the insane, was busy in piling the dry moss he had gathered about the base of the oak. Reuben also saw him take a box of lucifer matches from his pocket. It was clear that his intention was to burn them down. Reuben knew from experience that a forest in autumn was but too easily ignited, and he shuddered at the horrible fate that awaited Baby and himself, if the maniac was not in some way arrested in his purpose.

Bidding Baby remain perfectly still, he crept gently out on one of the lower branches, directly overhanging the spot where the madman was striving to ignite a match. He was so occupied with his fiendish task that he did not once look up. Reuben let himself down until he swung by his arms, and poised himself exactly over the stooping figure beneath. Then breathing a prayer to Heaven for his success, he dropped. He fell on the madman with a fearful crash. There was a fierce groan, as he tumbled over on the sward, and when he rose, half expecting to find a deadly grasp upon his throat, a black mass, that lay quivering, as if in the last agonies, at the base of the tree, was all that could be seen. A shout of joy announced to Baby Bloom her safety, and in another moment she and Reuben were kneeling on the turf, with entwining arms, thanking God for their escape.

Baby's entrance that night into Harlem was indeed triumphal. Every neighbor within three miles hastened to old father Bloom's, and she had to tell her story over and over again, until she grew so weary that she nodded over the most thrilling portions. And brave Reuben Lowe was a hero for many a day after, and when next New Year he and Baby were married in the old wooden church, every one said that he deserved to win her, and that God would bless their union. Even the consumptive Shanghai was heard to utter a joyful crow on that solemn occasion, which so delighted Mrs. Bloom, that she began to entertain serious doubts whether the affection of the chest under which her favorite labored might not be cured after all.

The poor maniac, whose body was found in the forest the same evening, proved to be a crazy ornithologist, who had escaped weeks before from his keeper, and his death, however unavoidable, was the only drawback to the wedded happiness of Reuben and Baby Bloom.

When the heroine of this little story told me the main facts herself, the other day in Harlem, there was a second Baby Bloom running about the floor. Let us hope that if she wins as brave a husband as Reuben, it will not be such a terrible adventure as that by which her mother gained her heart's desire.

#### AN EPISODE OF THE WAR.

"IF you had a brother there, I could understand it; or if you were going to nurse some old friend; but, as it is, I must say, Sara,

this sudden resolution of yours seems to me a very wild-goose scheme," said Mr. H—— to his sister-in-law, as they walked before a handsome summer residence in the gray twilight of a quiet and pensive autumnal afternoon.

"Every Englishman is a brother to me, and a friend also, in one sense," answered Sara, gently yet firmly; "and you well know, George, that my resolution is not a sudden one by any means. Besides, you must recollect how many things have occurred to make me feel that it is right for me to undertake this duty. Remember how peculiarly I have been fitted and prepared for the work. You can not have forgotten that terrible accident at the coal-pits, and how much of the care of the sufferers devolved upon me. And then that awful cholera time! Oh, George! you can not but feel that, far from embarking in a wild-goose scheme, I am only following a course which, without any seeking of mine, has been pointed out to me."

"But you seem to forget, Sara, that it was your own people whose sufferings you relieved, and that the accident took place on Henry's estate. Again, in that cholera time—awful you may well call it—all the sick were known to you; they were your brother's tenants. You had visited them in their own cottages, had made intimate acquaintance with every man, woman, and child among them, before those who were taken ill had been removed to the Hall—a rather Quixotic proceeding, as I still think it was, on Henry's part; but, of course, he is at liberty to do what he pleases. Yet, Quixotic as I have always thought him, I am really very much surprised that he should have given his approval to such a scheme as this. What he and Edith can be thinking of to allow you to go, passes my powers of comprehension!" And here the worthy gentleman shook his head, and quickened his steps in proportion as his vexation rose higher, while glancing at the handsome but delicate-looking woman walking by his side, and thinking how unfitted she was, alike by nature and gentle nurture, for the scenes she must encounter in the hospitals at Scutari.

"What Henry and Edith are thinking of," said Sara, "I can readily tell you. They are thinking that I ought not to shrink from a work for which I have been, as it were, educated. They feel that, in becoming nurse, I am not forsaking duties of more paramount importance. They know, by experience, that I have strength and nerve sufficient for any demands that are likely to be made upon either. They have seen that it was not without a struggle I made up my mind at first, but that afterward I considered it the greatest privilege that had ever been bestowed upon me to be allowed to join that devoted band of women who are using all their energies in the noblest work in which woman can be engaged." And while Sara spoke, her deep-blue eyes brightened, even though they were filling with tears, and her mouth quivered with emotion. But she hastily wiped away her tears, and resumed her expression of calm com-